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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
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Washington DC 20330-5000

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AF REGULATION 12-1

10 February 1986

Records Management

AIR FORCE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This regulation establishes the Air Force Records Management Program. It lists the program requirements and objectives, and assigns responsibilities. It applies to all Air Force personnel and activities, including the Air National Guard (ANG) and United States Air Force Reserve (USAFR), and contractor personnel who manage Air Force records. It implements the Federal laws and regulations listed in paragraph 2. This regulation will not be supplemented without prior written consent from HQ USAF/DAQD, The Pentagon, Wash DC 20330-5000.

Section A—Basis, Requirements, and Objectives of the Air Force Records Management Program

1. **Terms Explained:**

a. Electronic Recordkeeping. Methodologies by which record copies of office files are maintained only as machine-generated files and stored on magnetic media or optical disks without paper backup.

b. Machine-Readable Records. Records stored on magnetic media, such as tape, disk packs, floppy disks, or on optical disks. Machine-readable records require machine processing for conversion to human readable form.

c. Microform System. Any system for the production, reproduction, maintenance, storage, retrieval, display, or use of microforms. Microform is a generic term for any medium, such as microfilm, aperture cards, optical disk, video disk, or video tape containing miniaturized images that cannot be read without special display equipment.

2. Statutory and Regulatory Basis. The Air Force Records Management Program implements:

a. Title 5 U.S.C. 552, Public information; agency rules, opinions, orders, records, and procedures (Freedom of Information Act) (implemented by AFR 12-30); and Section 552a, Records maintained on individuals (Public Law 93-579, The Privacy Act of 1974) (implemented by AFR 12-35).

b. Title 44 U.S.C. chapters: 29—Records Management by the Archivist of the United States and by the Administrator of General Services; 31—Records Management by Federal Agencies, 3101-3107 (Federal Records Act of 1950); and 33—Disposal of Records, 3301-3314 (implemented by AFRs 12-1, 12-4, 12-20, and 12-50).

c. Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), chapter XII, National Archives and Records Administration, issued by National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

d. Title 41 CFR, Federal Information Resources Management Regulation (FIRMR), chapter 201, which is issued by the Office of Information Resources Management, General Services Administration (GSA).

e. Title 8, General Accounting Office Policy and Procedures Manual for Guidance of Federal Agencies, Records Management.

f. Department of Defense directives, instructions, and regulations:

(1) DOD Directive (DODD) 4120.22, Department of Defense Micrographics Program, 20 June 1977 (implemented by AFR 12-40).

(2) DODD 5015.2, Records Management Program, 17 September 1980 (implemented by AFR 12-1).

(3) DODD 5400.7, DOD Freedom of Information Act Program, 24 March 1980, with changes 1 through 3 (implemented by AFR 12-30).

(4) DOD 5400.7-R, DOD Freedom of Information Act Program, December 1980 (implemented by AFR 12-30).

(5) DODD 5400.11, Department of Defense Privacy Program, 9 June 1982 (implemented by AFR 12-35).

(6) DOD 5400.11-R, Department of Defense Privacy Program, 31 August 1983 (implemented by AFR 12-35).

(7) DOD Instruction 7230.7, User Charges, 24 Jan 1985 (implemented by AFR 12-32).

3. Ownership of Records. All records belong to the command whose organization or activities they document. Ownership of records created by a command which provides support to another is determined by function.

a. Records documenting the functions of the host command are owned by the host command.

b. Records documenting the functions of the supporting command are owned by the supporting command.

NOTE: The custodian of the records is responsible for servicing, disposing or retiring records, and for processing all requests for access. The owner of the records

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has denial authority under the Privacy Act or the Freedom of Information Act. These responsibilities may be modified by agreement between command records managers (RMs).

4. Program Requirements. The Secretary of the Air Force, as head of a federal agency, must:

a. Create and preserve records that document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, and essential transactions of the Air Force to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and individuals affected by Air Force actions (see AFRs 12–4; 12–20; and 12-50, volume I and II).

b. Compile and issue a comprehensive records disposition schedule for all records regardless of media (see AFR 12–50, volume II).

c. Establish safeguards to prevent the unlawful removal, unauthorized disposal, alteration, or mutilation of records (see AFR 12–50, volume I).

d. Develop and issue rules and procedures for administering the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Acts (see AFRs 12–30 and 12–35).

e. Make information about Air Force operations and activities available to the public, and collect user fees for this service (see AFRs 12–30 and 12–32).

f. Establish policies and procedures to identify, validate, and analyze designs for micrographic systems and electronic recordkeeping (see AFRs 12–4 and 12–40).

5. Program Objectives. The objectives of the Air Force Records Management Program are to develop, and evaluate and issue policies, procedures, and systems to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements outlined in paragraph 2, and to apply automated systems when feasible to manage records. They include:

a. **Creating Records:**

(1) Develop policies and procedures to ensure that only essential records are created and nonessential records are eliminated.

(2) Review directives and forms before they are published to make sure any ambiguous or unnecessary instructions to create records, channel information, or maintain files are clarified or deleted, and to ensure compliance with AFR 12–30 (Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)) and AFR 12–35 (Privacy Act).

b. **Managing Active Records.** Develop and issue policies and procedures to govern the custody, arrangement, maintenance, and use of records needed to conduct current Air Force business. Coordinate these guidelines with the policies and procedures governing the disposition of inactive records.

(1) Evaluate systems and procedures used to maintain, service, and use active records, regardless of type media in which they are created.

(2) Develop and establish standards for supplies and equipment to maintain, service, and use active records. Establish policy and procedural controls to ensure effective use of equipment, manpower, and space to maintain and service inactive records.

(3) Develop procedures to:

(a) Provide safeguards to prevent the unauthorized access, removal, loss, or destruction of Air Force records.

(b) Recover records unlawfully removed from the custody of Air Force activities.

(c) Reconstruct those records involved in unauthorized destruction.

c. **Disposing of Inactive Records.** Develop policies to govern systematic disposition of inactive records by destruction, retirement to federal records centers, transfer to the National Archives, or any other method authorized by law (see AFR 12–50, volumes I and II).

(1) Establish criteria to dispose of or preserve inactive records. Use their administrative, legal, research, historical, or other value to determine criteria.

(2) Obtain authority for records disposal from the Archivist of the United States through the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). If necessary, coordinate the disposition with other federal agencies.

(3) Develop procedures to govern retiring, storing, servicing, and exploiting records before they are destroyed or transferred to the National Archives for permanent safekeeping.

d. **Managing Micrographics:**

(1) Develop and issue micrographics management policies and procedures to use in the Air Force Records Management Program (see AFR 12–40).

(2) Be aware of advancements in technology and developments in equipment. Promote the use of modern methods and techniques to provide more effective, efficient, or economical systems to produce, store, and retrieve records.

(3) Evaluate, coordinate, approve, or disapprove the use of micrographic systems to manage Air Force records. Base decisions on:

(a) Policies and requirements that affect the creation, maintenance, use, and disposal of Air Force records.

(b) Information furnished in the micrographics proposal. The coordination or comments of activities having a functional interest in the records or a responsibility for implementing the system must be included.

e. **Managing and Operating Engineering Data Service Centers (EDSC).** Develop and issue policies and procedures to manage EDSCs that support the engineering data distribution and control program (see AFRs 12–41 and 67–28).

f. **Managing the Freedom of Information Act Program.** Develop and issue policies and procedures to implement the FOIA (see AFR 12–30). Include provisions to:

(1) Make available to the general public information and records about Air Force operations and activities as required by the Act.

(2) Provide the requester with facilities and services to inspect records, obtain information, or obtain copies of records.

(3) Collect fees according to established rates for copying, certifying, and searching records.

(4) Provide for submitting required reports to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).

(5) Provide for the marking, handling, and protecting "For Official Use Only" (FOUO) records.

g. Managing the Air Force Privacy Act Program. Develop and issue policies and procedures to manage the Privacy Act Program (see AFR 12-35). Include provisions to:

(1) Collect and safeguard personal data in systems of records.

(2) Submit required reports to the Congress and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Publish notices of new or altered systems of records in the Federal Register.

(3) Maintain, use, access, amend, and disseminate personal information kept in Air Force systems of records.

h. Authenticating Air Force Records. Develop methods and issue policies and procedures for the authentication process (see AFR 12-17).

i. Providing Records Management Training. Develop training programs and provide orientation for Air Force personnel engaged in records management, and in the administration of the FOIA, Privacy Act, and micrographics programs (see AFPs 12-2, 12-3 and 12-61, and AFR 12-60).

j. Managing the Federal Register Program. Develop and issue policies and procedures to publish in the Federal Register any Air Force records affecting the public. Approve or disapprove all Air Force activities' requests for distribution of the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations (see AFR 12-33).

Section B—Responsibilities Assigned

6. Management Officials. Commanders and staff agency chiefs are responsible for implementing a viable records management program within their areas of responsibility. They must create adequate records that properly document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of their offices. They must safeguard and preserve such records.

7. Air Force Records Manager. The responsibilities of the Chief, Records Management Branch (HQ USAF/DAQD), as Air Force Records Manager, are imposed by Federal statutes and regulations (see paragraph 2). In addition to developing and issuing policies and procedures designed to carry out the program in paragraph 4, the Air Force Records Manager:

a. Represents the Secretary of the Air Force on records management issues.

(1) Maintains liaison with NARA and GSA using the guidelines in Titles 36 and 41 CFR.

(2) Certifies to NARA the disposability of records which are no longer of administrative, legal, research, historical, or other value to the Air Force. Uses Titles 36, chapter XII, and 41 CFR, chapter 201; and Title 44 U.S.C., chapters 29, 30, and 31 to determine retention periods for all records regardless of media.

(3) Obtains approval or concurrence of the Comptroller General of the United States to dispose of records relating to claims and demands by or against the government or accounts affecting the government. Recommends disposal according to Title 8 of the General Accounting Office Manual for Guidance of Federal Agencies.

(4) Negotiates agreements on transfer of Air Force records to the National Archives, federal records centers, other federal agencies, or private organizations. Uses agreements to govern storage, service, ultimate disposal, access, or use of the records.

(5) Negotiates Air Force use of microform-based and machine-readable storage and retrieval systems with the Archivist of the United States, the Director of the National Bureau of Standards, the Comptroller General of the United States, and heads of other government agencies.

(6) Evaluates, approves, or disapproves electronic recordkeeping proposals.

b. Appoints the HQ USAF Records Manager to manage the HQ USAF and SAF records.

8. Command Records Manager (RM). (As used in this regulation, the term "command" includes major commands (MAJCOM), separate operating agencies (SOA), and direct reporting units (DRU). It covers the Air Force element of the National Guard Bureau and HQ USAF.)The chief of the command records function, the command RM:

a. Has total responsibility for managing all records according to ownership established by paragraph 3.

b. Manages the Records Management Program within the command and ensures compliance with 12-series publications. Provides guidance, establishes procedures, identifies problems, and takes corrective action.

c. Ensures orderly maintenance, proper use, and systematic disposition of records.

d. Ensures economical use of equipment, supplies, and space for maintaining the records.

e. Administers the programs required by the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Staffs all denial recommendations under the Privacy Act and serves as the FOIA manager. Acts as the single point of contact for staff agencies and subordinate units.

f. Provides guidance for acquiring and using microform-based records and information storage and retrieval systems. Reviews and evaluates automated system proposals for their effect on the creation, transfer,

storage, retrieval, and disposition of machine-readable records. Submits proposals for electronic recordkeeping to HQ USAF/DAQD for approval prior to testing or implementing. Submits recommendations for disposition of machine-readable records to HQ USAF/DAQD.

g. Manages the Engineering Data Service Center (EDSC) program within the command. Reviews, approves, or disapproves all requests to establish, upgrade, downgrade, or disestablish EDSCs. Establishes and supervises the policies, systems, methods, and standard practices for EDSCs. Provides staff guidance, assistance, and surveillance over lower echelons. Coordinates with other headquarters staff offices that have an interest in engineering data to ensure the effective development and operation of the EDSCs.

h. Provides training for all military and civilian personnel who maintain, provide access to, or dispose of records.

i. Provides briefings to, coordinates with, and identifies areas requiring special review by the Command Inspector General (IG) teams. Provides evaluation criteria and standards for functional area inspectors.

j. Makes staff assistance visits to their subordinate units as often as manpower and funds allow.

k. Notifies HQ USAF/DAQD in writing of the name, grade or rank, telephone number, and location of the command RM.

9. Records Manager (RM). The Records Manager is the chief of the records function at units below MAJCOM level where there is a Director, Chief of Administration, or other administrative element, as AFR 26-2 specifies. The RM administers the Records Management Program within the organization. In host-tenant support agreements, if both command RMs agree, the host RM is responsible for tenant activities. The RM:

a. Assists the Functional Area Records Managers (FARM), custodians, and clerks to follow this regulation and other 12-series directives. (See paragraphs 10, 11 and 12 for information on FARMs, custodians, and clerks.)

b. Implements, administers, monitors, provides guidance, and serves as FOIA manager and point of contact for the Privacy Act.

c. Provides guidance to records custodians on approving, acquiring, and using microform-based records and information storage and retrieval systems. Reviews and evaluates automated system proposals for effect on the creation, transfer, storage, retrieval, and disposition of machine-readable records. Submits proposals from offices of primary responsibility (OPR) for electronic recordkeeping to the command RM prior to testing or implementing.

d. Provides or orders engineering data for all organizations, including tenant units, located on or near the installation. Establishes and operates an Engineering Data Service Center (EDSC), appropriately categorized to satisfy the needs of all installation users. Works with the users of engineering data and the base commander to locate the EDSC in a convenient, easily accessible location.

e. Reviews all requests for storage and retrieval equipment to ensure its proper use.

f. Reviews the AF Form 80, Files Maintenance and Disposition Plan, of each office of record. Maintains a copy if necessary.

g. Makes sure active records are properly and economically maintained and used. Schedules systematic disposition of inactive records.

h. Schedules and provides training for all military and civilian personnel, including tenant activities' personnel, who maintain, provide access to, and dispose of records.

i. Supervises staging areas and provides staging area support for tenant activities. Maintains lists (or SF 135s) for records in the staging area, and for records transferred to other agencies or federal records centers.

j. Monitors the records program for joint activities when the Air Force is designated the executive agent.

k. At least every 18 months, performs staff assistance visits to offices of record.

l. Notifies the MAJCOM, SOA, or DRU RM of his or her name, grade or rank, location, and telephone number.

10. Functional Area Records Manager (FARM). The command RM may authorize or require the chief of a principal staff office within an Air Force organization to appoint a FARM. This appointment depends on the span of control, the complexities of the mission, and the size of the organization's functional areas. The FARM:

a. Serves as the point of contact and monitors the Records Management Program within his or her functional area.

b. Furnishes guidance and assistance to records custodians and records clerks for maintaining and disposing of records.

c. Monitors the designation of offices of record. Ensures that all records are listed on file plans.

d. Assists personnel in preparing files maintenance and disposition plans. Reviews file plans. Retains a copy of the file plan, if necessary. Accesses automated file plans.

e. Reviews and coordinates on each request for storage and retrieval equipment or supplies.

f. Conducts, coordinates, and monitors staff assistance visits. Ensures that corrective action is taken on discrepancies noted during visits.

g. Monitors timely retirement of eligible records from functional areas. If required, maintains a copy of shipment lists for records that go to staging areas or federal records centers.

h. Schedules training for personnel who maintain and dispose of records, when required.

i. Every 18 months, or as specified by the RM, makes

staff assistance visits to offices of records.

j. Assists the RM in reviewing and evaluating automated systems for their effect on the creation, transfer, storage, retrieval, and disposition of machine-readable records. Assists in preparing proposals for electronic recordkeeping. Forwards proposals through channels to the RM prior to testing or implementing. Assists in establishing and evaluating micrographic systems.

11. Records Custodian. The records custodian is the chief of an office having Air Force records. He or she may be the person who has physical possession of records used in his or her duties, such as the recorder for a board or committee. The records custodian:

a. Is responsible for all records the office creates regardless of physical characteristics to include identification of appropriate disposition authorities for records maintained.

b. Ensures that only essential records are created, nonessential records are eliminated, and permanently valuable records are preserved.

c. Ensures proper and adequate procurement and use of filing supplies and equipment to house the records in their custody.

d. Ensures records clerks receive a thorough briefing about the office functions and the reasons the records are maintained.

e. Ensures that personnel who maintain, use, and dispose of records receive training.

f. Develops, justifies, and submits proposals for establishing microform-based records and information storage and retrieval systems to the records manager. Assists the RM in reviewing and evaluating automated systems for their effect on the creation, transfer, storage, retrieval, and disposition of machine-readable records. Submits proposals for electronic recordkeeping to the RM prior to testing or implementing.

12. Records Clerk. The records clerk maintains, services, and disposes of the records of the office to which he or she is assigned. To be effective, the records clerk must:

a. Know the function the records support.

b. Know the purposes the records serve and adjust the filing practices so accurate and effective reference service can be furnished the users of the records.

c. Maintain a copy of the AF Forms 80, Files Maintenance and Disposition Plan, and Standard Forms 135, Records Transmittal and Receipt, for his or her office. If automated, have access to the electronic files.

d. Know the capabilities and limitations of the equipment used for storing the records and retrieving the information from the files (including microforms and machine-readable records).

e. Know and implement the records maintenance, use, and disposition policies and procedures for the records he or she maintains.

f. Consult with the records custodian, and when necessary, with the FARM and the Records Manager on problems affecting the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of records.

g. Assist the custodian, FARM or RM in reviewing and evaluating automated systems. Evaluate the effect on the creation, transfer, storage, retrieval, and disposition of machine-readable records. Assist in preparing proposals for electronic recordkeeping. Send proposals through channels to the RM prior to testing or implementing.

Section C—Management Duties

13. Staff Assistance Program. The command RM, RM, and FARM must have an active and continuing staff assistance program. Staff assistance visits must be made to ensure the efficient and economical creation, management, and disposition of records.

a. The command RM must conduct staff assistance visits to his or her subordinate units as often as manpower and funds allow. The command RM may use IG management effectiveness inspections of base records programs having a "satisfactory" or higher rating to meet this requirement.

b. The RM or FARM must schedule and make a staff assistance visit to each office of record at least every 18 months. The command RM may establish staff assistance visits for geographically separated units (GSU) and operating locations.

c. Visits should cover the FARM program, records management, training, Freedom of Information and Privacy Act programs, staging areas, micrographics, Engineering Data Service Centers, machine-readable records, and any command-unique items.

14. Command Supplements. Command supplements or publications affecting 12–series regulations should be kept to a minimum. Drafts of Command supplements must have HQ USAF/DAQD approval prior to publication. A copy of the final product must be sent to HQ USAF/DAQD after issuance. A command may approve the supplements of its subordinate units.

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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

OFFICIAL

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This revision changes the name of the Documentation Management Program to the Records Management Program; changes the word "document" to "record;" makes the regulation applicable to the Air National Guard and the United States Air Force Reserve and contractors who manage Air Force records (purpose para); requires HQ USAF/DAQD approval of command supplements prior to their publication (purpose para and para 14); adds the Freedom of Information Act Program (para 4d); adds procedures for micrographics and machine-readable records management (para 4f); adds requirements for records management for commanders and staff agency chiefs (para 6); adds review by command Records Managers, Records Managers, Functional Area Records Managers, Records Custodian and Records Clerks of automated systems by records managers (paras 7a(6), 8f, 9c, 10j, 11f, and 12g); establishes requirements provisions for command RMs to brief IG inspectors (para 8i); expands responsibilities of the Functional Area Records Managers (para 10); establishes a requirement that command RMs make staff visits to subordinate commands as manpower and travel funds permit (para 13a); allows an IG inspection to be considered a staff assistance visit if the office rates "satisfactory" or higher during the IG visit (para 13a); establishes a requirement that an RM or FARM visits each office of record at least once every 18 months (para 13b); and authorizes command approval of its subordinate unit supplements (para 14).